

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00
ACDA-12 IO-13 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07 SOE-02 DOE-15
CEQ-01 /133 W

-----045987 171421Z /45

O 171259Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0974

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DACCA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL MADRAS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN, US

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY DISCUSSION FOLLOWING PM'S STATEMENT
ON HIMALAYAN MONITORING DEVICE

REF: NEW DELHI 5959

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1. TEXT OF PM DESAI'S STATEMENT TO THE LOK SABHA APRIL 17 ON
REPORTS OF HIMALAYAN NUCLEAR-POWERED MONITORING DEVICE IS
BEING SENT SEPTTEL. THE STATEMENT WAS READ IN RESPONSE TO A
CALLING ATTENTION MOTION RAISED BY FIVE MP'S: TWO JANATA, TWO
OFFICIAL CONGRESS (BOTH AVOWED LEFTISTS) AND ONE FROM THE
LEFTIST FORWARD BLOC. EACH OF THE FIVE MP'S ASKED A SINGLE
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION, AND THE PM RESPONDED TO EACH OF THESE

INDIVIDUALLY. EMBOFF WHO WAS PRESENT FOR THE DEBATE REPORTS THE FOLLOWING:

2. AFTER THE PRIME MINISTER HAD FINISHED READING HIS STATEMENT, THERE WAS POLITE TABLE-THUMPING OF APPROVAL FROM NOT ONLY THE JANATA BENCHES BUT ALSO FROM SOME OF THE CONGRESS BENCHES. THEN FOLLOWED THE QUESTIONS FROM THE FIVE CO-SPONSORS OF THE CALLING ATTENTION MOTION. ALL OF THESE, BUT PARTICULARLY THE TWO LEFTIST OFFICIAL CONGRESS MP'S (K. LAKAPPA AND K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN), SOUGHT TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON CIA ACTIVITIES IN INDIA. THEY SEEMED TO TAKE THE PM'S STATEMENT AT HIS WORD. MORARJI, IN HIS RESPONSE TO EACH, TURNED ASIDE THE CIA ANGLE RATHER DEFTLY BY REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZING THAT THE DECISION ON THE DEVICE WAS "TAKEN AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS." HE SAID: "DON'T BLAME THE CIA OR THE CBI (INDIA'S CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION). THEY WERE JUST ACTING ON ORDERS FROM THE HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVELS." ON THIS MATTER, HE SAID THAT HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVELS MEANT THE LEVEL OF THE PRIME MINISTER, MORARJI NOTED THAT THREE PRIME MINISTERS WERE IN OFFICE DURING THE PERIOD IN QUESTION. HE IMPLIED THAT NEHRU WAS INVOLVED SINCE THE PERIOD BEGAN IN 1964 -- "EARLY 1964." (NEHRU DIED MAY 27, 1964.)

3. AT ONE POINT, THE PM SUGGESTED THAT THE INITIATIVE FOR THE ACTION HAD COME FROM INDIAN SCIENTISTS, BUT IN REPOSE TO QUESTIONS HE DECLINED TO NAME INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANIZATIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHO MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED AT THE TIME. HE SAID: "I AM CONVINCED IT WAS NOT STARTED BY EITHER CIA OR THE INDIAN INTELLIGENCE. THIS WAS STARTED BY THE SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT OF THIS COUNTRY. I WON'T NAME ANYBODY. IT WOULD NOT BE FAIR TO DO IT." DURING THE DEBATE, TH REPEATED THE ASSERTION IN HIS STATEMENT THAT THE ACTION WAS TAKEN IN THE LIHGT OF SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION PREVAILING AT THE TIME. MORARJI ADDED THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN SUCH A DECISION AT THAT TIME, NOR WOULD HE DO IT TODAY. HE SAID THAT THE DANGERS OF NUCLEAR CONTAMINATION IS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY HE HAS STATED HIS OPPOSITION TO THE MANUFACTURE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

4. IN RESPONSE TO ONE QUESTION ABOUT CIA ACTIVITIES IN INDIA TODAY, THE PM REPEATED THE LAST LINE OF HIS STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT NO OTHER SUCH DEVICE EXISTS ON INDIAN SOIL AND THAT NO SUCH HAZARDOUS OPERATIONS WOULD BE PERMITTED ON INDIAN SOIL.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE PROVOKED THE ONLY UPROAR DURING THE HOUR-LONG DEBATE. ONE MP RECALLED THAT VAJPAYEE HAD

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AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE
C/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 4691
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

TOLD THE PRESS IN CALCUTTA APRIL 16 THAT THE PM' STATEMENT
WOULD BE A "BOMBSHELL". THE MP ASKED RHETORICALLY: WHERE IS
THE BOMBSHELL?" THE PM SUGGESTED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER
WAS SPEAKING ON HIS OWN AND ADDED THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO GET
INVOLVED IN THE ARGUMENT. VAJPAYEE, HOWEVER, THEN ROSE AND
SHOUTED AT THE OPPOSITION CONGRESS BENCHES: "I DID SAY THE
REVELATIONS WILL BE A BOMBSHELL BECAUSE MRS. INDIRA GANDHI,
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WHO HAD BEEN ACCUSING AMERICA AND THE CIA AND ACCUSING US ALSO (I.E., THE THEN OPPOSITION) OF JOINING HANDS WITH AMERICA DURING THE EMERGENCY, HERSELF JOINED HANDS WITH AMERICA IN THE SITUATION." THE REST OF HIS WORDS WERE DROWNED OUT IN ANGRY SHOUTS FROM CONGRESSMEN. THESE, HOWEVER, DISSIPATED SURPRISINGLY RAPIDLY.

6. THE PM ALSO REITERATED THAT THE GOI WAS CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE CONTAMINATION AND REPEATED THAT A HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE OF SCIENTISTS WILLBE ESTABLISHED TO INVESTIGATE THIS ISSUE ANEW.

7. WHEN AN MP FROM THE FORWARD BLOC SOUGHT REASSURANCES THAT THE DEVICE, WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN USED TO MONITOR CHINESE ACTIVITIES, HAD BEEN REMOVED, MORARJI REPLIED WITHOUT NAMING ANY COUNTRY: "THERE IS NO QUESTION OF USING ANY DEVICE AGAINST ANYBODY. WE DONOT BELIEVE IN THIS KIND OF THING. THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE ARE NOT PRUDENT OR DO NOT TAKE PRECAUTIONS. WE ARE NOT GOING TO ACT IN AN UNFRIENDLY MANNER TOWARDS ANY COUNTRY WHATSOEVER....WE ARE TRULY AND PROPERLY NON-ALIGNED AND WE WANT TO BE FRIENDLY WITH ALL."

8. THE PRIME MINISTER CONDUCTED HIMSELF WITH DIGNITY AND CALM THROUGHOUT THE DEBATE, AND HE SEEMED TO BE CLEARLY IN CONTROL OF THE DISCUSSION. AT ONE POINT, HE SENT CHUCKLES AROUND THE CHAMBER BY QUOTING A SANSKRIT PROVERB, WHICH HE THEN GRACIOUSLY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FOR THE NON-HINDI SPEAKING OPPOSITION BENCHES. THE EMBOFF WHO WAS PRESENT FOUND THE ABSENCE OF HEAT DURING THE DEBATE REMARKABLE. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THOSE PROVOKED BY VAJPAYEE'S OUTBURST, THERE WERE VIRTUALLY NO ANGRY SHOUTS FROM THE OPPOSITION BENCHES AFTER THE PM RESPONDED TO EACH SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION. THE ENTIRE DISCUSSION ENDED QUIETLY EXACTLY ONE HOUR AFTER IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEGAN. AFTER MORARJI HAD RESPONDED TO THE LAST OF THE FIVE CO-SPONSORS, THE SPEAKER CALMLY WENT ON TO THE NEXT ITEM OF BUSINESS AND MOST OF THE MP'S ROSE TO TAKE A DELAYED LUNCH. MORARJI ALSO LEFT THE CHAMBER IN THE COMPANY OF VAJPAYEE AND OTHER SENIOR JANATA FIGURES.
GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

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